

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 114279
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY ARA:WILLIAM H. LUERS;JLP
APPROVED BY ARA:WILLIAM H. LUERS
ARA/PAN:SMBELL
S/S-O:S.STEINER
NSC:R.PASTOR

-----182030Z 067764 /64

O 181855Z MAY 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 114279

EXDIS-FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM LUERS, ACTING

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, PN

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT CARTER RECEIVES CREDENTIALS FROM
AMBASSADOR LEWIS

1. AMBASSADOR LEWIS, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE NITA AND
SON SAMUEL, PRESENTED CREDENTIALS TO PRESIDENT CARTER ON
MAY 16. FOLLOWING THE PRESENTATION CEREMONY, AMBASSADOR
LEWIS AND THE PRESIDENT HELD A TEN-MINUTE CONVERSATION.
ALSO PRESENT WERE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR BRZEZINSKI
AND ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY LUERS.

2. THE PRESIDENT OPENED BY DISCUSSING AMBASSADOR LEWIS'
BUSINESS BACKGROUND AND AMBASSADOR LEWIS INDICATED MANY
OF HIS RELATIVES HAD ATTENDED GEORGIA TECH AND HIS NEPHEW
HAD BEEN AT GEORGIA TECH WITH JACK CARTER.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 114279

3. TURNING TO THE NEGOTIATIONS, AMBASSADOR LEWIS SAID
THAT MORE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE NEGOTIATING ON THE CANAL
IN THE PRESIDENT'S FIRST 100 DAYS THAN IN THE LAST 40
YEARS. THE PRESIDENT REPLIED IN GOOD HUMOR THAT HE AND
THE AMBASSADOR WERE CERTAIN TO GET ALONG WELL. THE
PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE HAD GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS TO ENGAGE
THE DIFFICULT ISSUES IMMEDIATELY AND DIRECTLY. IT HAD

BEEN THE PRESIDENT'S IMPRESSION THAT, IN RECENT YEARS, NEGOTIATORS HAD AVOIDED THE DIFFICULT ISSUES. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE WAS PLEASED WITH THE PROGRESS BEING MADE AND THAT HE WANTED TO MOVE QUICKLY TO SIGN A TREATY. HE SAID WE WANT ONLY TO BE CERTAIN THAT AFTER THE EXPIRATION OF THE TREATY, THE CANAL WILL BE PROTECTED AND OPEN TO ALL ON AN EQUAL BASIS. AMBASSADOR LEWIS SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT UNDERSTOOD THE U.S. POSITION ON THIS POINT AND THAT HE HAD NOTICED THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS GETTING STRONGER EVERYDAY SO THAT BY THE YEAR 2,000, THE U.S. NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT THE PROTECTION OF THE CANAL.

4. AMBASSADOR LEWIS SAID THAT A PRIMARY CONSIDERATION HAD BEEN TO REACH AN AGREEMENT FOR THE YEAR 2,000 AS THE EXPIRATION DATE OF THE TREATY. ANOTHER PRIORITY HAS BEEN AGREEMENT ON AN ORDERLY PROCESS FOR DISMANTLING THE AMERICAN ENCLAVE IN THE ZONE. THE AMERICAN SIDE HAD RECENTLY PRESENTED A SERIES OF PROPOSALS ON THIS POINT AND THEY WERE BEING CONSIDERED NOW. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE GOING WELL AND HE WONDERED WHETHER THE PRESIDENT WAS AGREEABLE TO HAVING THE NEGOTIATORS CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR AGREEMENT ON A TREATY NOW WHICH WOULD SATISFY THE U.S. REQUIREMENTS FOR AN ARRANGEMENT AFTER THE EXPIRATION OF THE TREATY AND TO SATISFY THE PANAMANIAN REQUIREMENT ON LANDS AND WATERS AND THE DISMANTLING OF THE ENCLAVE. THE PRESIDENT SAID YES, THAT IT WAS HIS INTENTION TO NEGOTIATE NOW AND TO
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 114279

REACH AN EARLY AGREEMENT. TURNING TO BRZEZINSKI, HE ASKED IF THAT WERE NOT THE CASE. DR. BRZEZINSKI REPLIED THAT YES, ALTHOUGH WITH CERTAIN QUALIFICATIONS DEPENDING ON THE PACE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS.

5. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED THE PRESIDENT IF HE HAD ANY MESSAGE FOR GENERAL TORRIJOS. PRESIDENT CARTER REPLIED THAT THE AMBASSADOR SHOULD CONVEY TO THE GENERAL HIS FRIENDSHIP AND HIS EXPRESSED DESIRE TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY A TREATY THAT WOULD SATISFY THE REQUIREMENTS OF BOTH NATIONS. HE ASKED THAT THE AMBASSADOR TELL GENERAL TORRIJOS THAT ONCE A TREATY HAS BEEN AGREED TO, HE WOULD LIKE TO MEET GENERAL TORRIJOS TO SIGN THE TREATY AND GET TO KNOW HIM PERSONALLY. AMBASSADOR LEWIS REPLIED THAT GENERAL TORRIJOS WANTED THE PRESIDENT TO KNOW THAT SINCE PRESIDENT CARTER WAS THE LAST HOPE OF THE PEOPLE OF PANAMA TO REACH AN AGREEMENT, THAT TORRIJOS DID NOT WANT TO MEET THE PRESIDENT UNTIL THE TREATY WAS READY FOR SIGNATURE. PRESIDENT CARTER NODDED IN AGREE-

MENT. AMBASSADOR LEWIS SAID THAT AT THAT TIME THE TWO
LEADERS CAN MEET AND SIGN AS BIG BROTHER AND LITTLE
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PLIED IMMEDIATELY, NO THAT THEY WOULD MEET AS EQUALS IN
THE NEW PARTNERSHIP. CHRISTOPHER

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PAGE 01 STATE 114279
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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

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DRAFTED BY: ARA:JKEANE
APPROVED BY: ARA:WHLUERS
S/S-O:SGOLDSMITH
NSC:RPASTOR

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R 211650Z MAY 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

S E C R E T STATE 114279

EXDIS FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM LUERS

FOLLOWING IS REPEAT STATE 114279, SENT PANAMA 18 MAY :

QUOTE S E C R E T STATE 114279

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SECRET

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PAGE 02 STATE 114279

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3. TURNING TO THE NEGOTIATIONS, AMBASSADOR LEWIS SAID THAT MORE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE NEGOTIATING ON THE CANAL IN THE PRESIDENT'S FIRST 100 DAYS THAN IN THE LAST 40 YEARS. THE PRESIDENT REPLIED IN GOOD HUMOR THAT HE AND THE AMBASSADOR WERE CERTAIN TO GET ALONG WELL. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE HAD GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS TO ENGAGE THE DIFFICULT ISSUES IMMEDIATELY AND DIRECTLY. IT HAD

BEEN THE PRESIDENT'S IMPRESSION THAT, IN RECENT YEARS, NEGOTIATORS HAD AVOIDED THE DIFFICULT ISSUES. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE WAS PLEASED WITH THE PROGRESS BEING MADE AND THAT HE WANTED TO MOVE QUICKLY TO SIGN A TREATY. HE SAID WE WANT ONLY TO BE CERTAIN THAT AFTER THE EXPIRATION OF THE TREATY, THE CANAL WILL BE PROTECTED AND OPEN TO ALL ON AN EQUAL BASIS. AMBASSADOR LEWIS SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT UNDERSTOOD THE U.S. POSITION ON THIS POINT AND THAT HE HAD NOTICED THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS GETTING STRONGER EVERYDAY SO THAT BY THE YEAR 2,000, THE U.S. NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT THE PROTECTION OF THE CANAL.

4. AMBASSADOR LEWIS SAID THAT A PRIMARY CONSIDERATION HAD BEEN TO REACH AN AGREEMENT FOR THE YEAR 2,000 AS THE EXPIRATION DATE OF THE TREATY. ANOTHER PRIORITY HAS BEEN AGREEMENT ON AN ORDERLY PROCESS FOR DISMANTLING THE AMERICAN ENCLAVE IN THE ZONE. THE AMERICAN SIDE HAD RECENTLY PRESENTED A SERIES OF PROPOSALS ON THIS POINT AND THEY WERE BEING CONSIDERED NOW. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE GOING WELL AND HE WONDERED WHETHER THE PRESIDENT WAS AGREEABLE TO HAVING
SECRET

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PAGE 03 STATE 114279

THE NEGOTIATORS CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR AGREEMENT ON A TREATY NOW WHICH WOULD SATISFY THE U.S. REQUIREMENTS FOR AN ARRANGEMENT AFTER THE EXPIRATION OF THE TREATY AND TO SATISFY THE PANAMANIAN REQUIREMENT ON LANDS AND WATERS AND THE DISMANTLING OF THE ENCLAVE. THE PRESIDENT SAID

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